

REMARKS

This amendment is responsive to the Office Action of March 6, 2007. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-23 are requested.

The Office Action

Claims 1-6 and 10-17 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Cragun (US 6,177,936) in view of Petropoulos (US 7,047,502).

Claims 7-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Cragun in view of Petropoulos, further in view of Hunt (US 2004/0133848).

Claims 18-23 are newly added.

The Present Amendment Should Be Entered

The finality of the Office Action of March 6, 2007 was premature.

The Office Action of March 6, 2007 cited a new ground of rejection against claim 1. Although claim 1 was amended, the amendment merely added the subject matter of dependent claim 6 which had depended directly from claim 1. Thus, claim 1 after being amended in the prior Office Action was nothing more and nothing less than original claim 6. Stated another way, the amendment effectively placed claim 6 in independent form including the subject matter of its parent claim, but added no other amendments.

Thus, because the subject matter of claim 1 had been previously presented and examined in original claim 6, the rejection of claim 1 on a new ground of rejection cannot properly be made final (MPEP 706.07(c)).

Because the finality of the March 6, 2007 Office Action was premature, the applicants are entitled to the entry of this amendment.

The Claims Are Now in Condition For Allowance

The applicant is submitting herewith a Declaration by the inventor with appropriate supporting evidence showing conception of the presently claimed invention prior to the filing date of at least one of the applied references. As set forth in MPEP 715, swearing behind any one reference eliminates that ground of rejection.

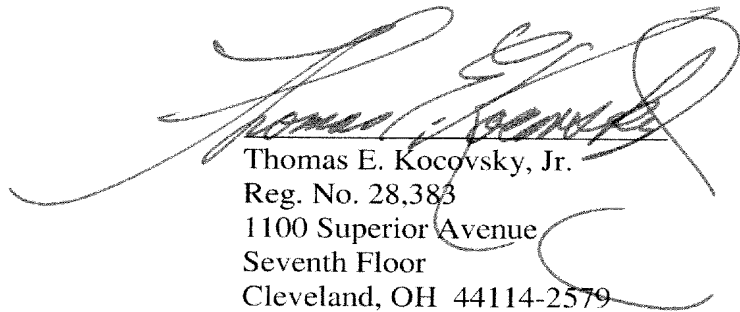
The 37 CFR 1.131 Declaration sets forth documentary exhibits and shows that each element of at least claim 1 is fully supported by a document prepared prior to the September 24, 2001 effective filing date of the Petropoulos reference.

With the rejection based on Petropoulos being obviated, it is submitted that all claims are now in condition for allowance.

An early allowance of all claims is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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